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As an educational sociologist who has advocated the study of society, culture, and heritage for three decades, I am especially enthusiastic about June McFee's essay on art and culture in this special issue of the Journal celebrating the millennium. McFee's perceptive observations on the central role that culture plays in our lives as we enter the 21st century is of utmost importance to the educational enterprise. This is reflected in her statement, "A key problem for the overloaded teacher is to keep from stereotyping students by ethnicity and *supposed cultural backgrounds* [italics added]." This advice should be heeded by everyone in teaching. McFee then goes on to warn us of the dangers of cultural stereotyping that can limit an educator's awareness of individual difference in our widely diverse society.

To offer some examples of McFee's assertions, I turn to material from my recent book, *Looking Into the Lives of Children: A Worldwide View* (1999). This volume describes a number of incidents of how people merely assume the others' ethnic identity. One example is found in the account of LiLo, a bi-ethnic woman of American and Chinese heritage (pp. 140-142); another is the account of children and their teachers in a bilingual early childhood classroom (pp. 39-43). A cross-cultural example of how educators can assume supposed cultural background is related in the narrative of Rosa's school experiences *On Being Black and American in a German Kindergarten*. This narrative exemplifies McFee's concerns stated above (King et al., 1994, pp. 91-96).

In detailing how culture is intertwined in the teaching of art, McFee again speaks for all the subjects of the curriculum. She notes that the major content for the education of art teachers should include understanding of how students are carriers of their culture. Hence this necessitates foundations in the social sciences and the inclusion of culture in the analysis of art history and of non-fine arts. Finally, turning to research, she calls for the need to utilize a crosscultural perspective drawn from psychology, sociology and cultural anthropology.

In her 1970 classic volume, *Preparation for Art*, McFee wrote:

Each child in school represents a particular family variation of the core of a sub-cultural group within the larger society. He (or she) is influenced by cultural reaction, cultural maintenance, and culture change as the group is influenced. Also the child, being unique, has received his (or her) family's culture in a way somewhat different from other children in the same family. (quoted in King, 1971, p. 85)

Similarly, in my books and articles I have emphasized that the old definitions of diversity are giving way to broader and more inclusive conceptions of the human condition. This movement will certainly find momentum in the millennium.

References

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